

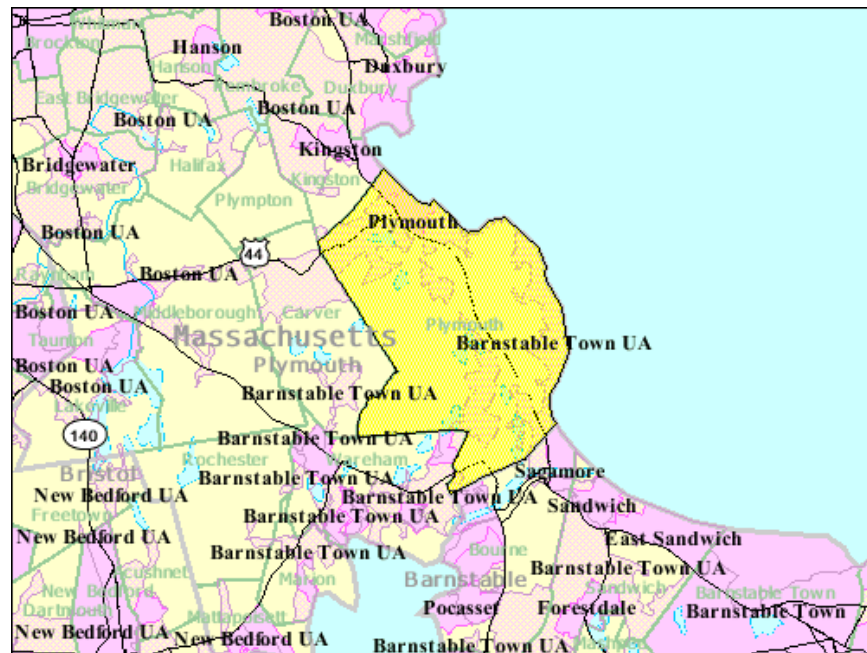
PLYMOUTH, MA¹

Community Profile²

PEOPLE AND PLACES

Regional orientation

The Town of Plymouth (41.96° N, 70.67° W) is located in Southeastern Massachusetts, and is the seat of Plymouth County. Plymouth faces Cape Cod Bay, and just borders Cape Cod. This enormous town covers 97.57 square miles of area (State of Massachusetts 2007) and is both the largest and the oldest municipality in Massachusetts (Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce 2007). Due to its large extent, there are many unofficial villages within the town boundaries: North Plymouth, Plymouth Center, West Plymouth, Chiltonville, Manomet, The Pinehills, Ellisville, Cedarville, South Plymouth, Bournedale (mainly part of neighboring Town of Bourne), and Buttermilk Bay (a neighborhood of Plymouth accessible only by road through neighboring towns of Bourne and Wareham) (MapQuest 2007).



Map 1. Location of Plymouth, MA (US Census Bureau 2000)

Historical/Background

Plymouth played a very important role in American history as one of the first colonies, a fact not soon forgotten by the town or any of the one million tourists who visit here annually (Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce 2007). The pilgrims were English separatists, leaving the Church of England and their homeland in search of religious freedom, believing the Church of England had not fulfilled the Reformation. They initially traveled to Holland, but then

¹ These community profiles have been created to serve as port descriptions in Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) for fisheries management actions. They also provide baseline information from which to begin research for Social Impact Assessments (SIAs). Further, they provide information relevant to general community impacts for National Standard 8 of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA) and information on minorities and low income populations for Executive Order (E.O.) 12898 on Environmental Justice.

² For purposes of citation please use the following template: "Community Profile of *Town, ST*. Prepared under the auspices of the National Marine Fisheries Service, Northeast Fisheries Science Center. For further information contact Lisa.L.Colburn@noaa.gov."

decided to journey to America. Originally headed for Northern Virginia, the Pilgrims were blown off course and found themselves off Provincetown. They eventually settled at Plymouth, creating the first European settlement in New England, drawing up the Mayflower Compact which established a new government. Plymouth was founded on December 21, 1620, later to become Plymouth Colony and eventually a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony (Historical Reference Center 1997). Long before the Pilgrims ever arrived, the Wampanoag living in the Plymouth area were highly dependent on fishing (Hall-Arber 2001). Today, Plymouth is a fishing and tourist center, with marine-related industries and cranberry-packing houses (Historical Reference Center 1997). Plymouth's beautiful scenery and its proximity to Boston have encouraged many people to move here and the town has seen a rapid increase in growth, with the population increasing by 145% in the last two decades (Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce 2007).

Demographics³

According to Census 2000 data, Plymouth had a total population of 51,701, up 13.4% from the reported population of 45,608 in 1990 (US Census Bureau 1990). Of this 2000 total, 49.7% were males and 50.3% were females. The median age was 36.5 years and 71.0% of the population was 21 years or older while 13.2% was 62 or older.

Plymouth's population structure (see Figure 1) was typical of a relatively young, family-oriented community. The largest age category was between the ages of 30-39, followed by 40-49, and there were also lots of children and teenagers. The population takes a dip for the 20-29 age bracket, as is common in many fishing communities when young people leave to go to college or to seek jobs; here it seems that either more women leave than men, or that some men move to Plymouth from elsewhere.

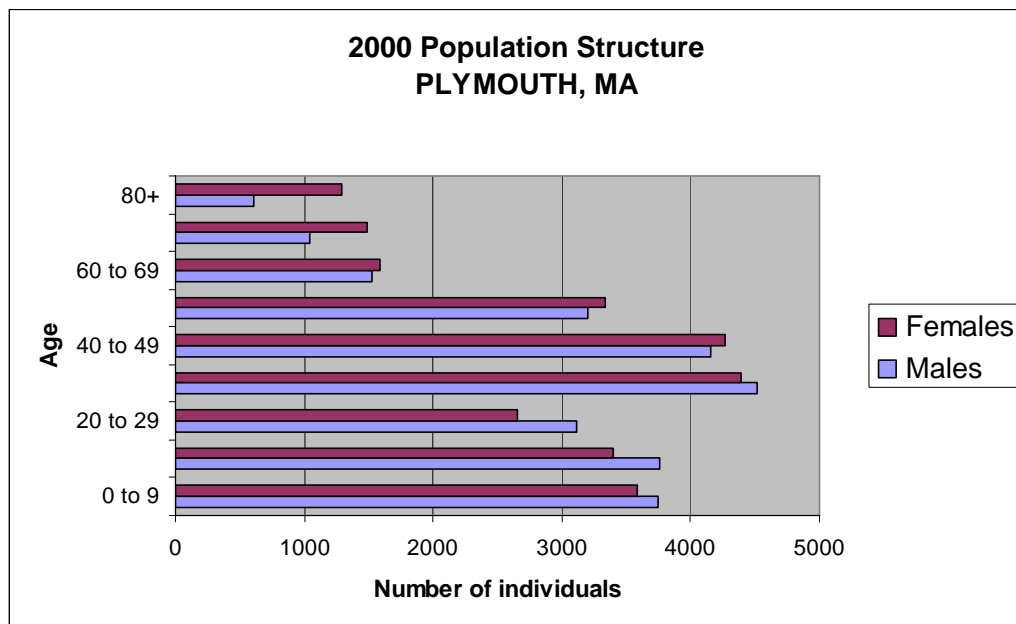


Figure 1. Plymouth's population structure by sex in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

³ While mid-term estimates are available for some larger communities, data from the 2000 Census are the only data universally available for the communities being profiled in the Northeast. Thus for cross-comparability we have used 2000 data even though these data may have changed significantly since 2000 for at least some communities.

The majority of the population was white (94.4%), with 2.5% of residents black or African American, 0.8% Asian, 0.7% Native American, and 0.1% Pacific Islander or Hawaiian (see Figure 2). Only 1.7% of the population identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino (see Figure 3). Residents linked their backgrounds to a number of different ancestries including: Irish (34.2%), Italian (18.1%), English (16.7%), German (7.3%), and Portuguese (6.3%). With regard to region of birth, 79.7% were born in Massachusetts, 16.0% were born in a different state and 3.5% were born outside of the U.S. (including 1.5% who were not United States citizens).

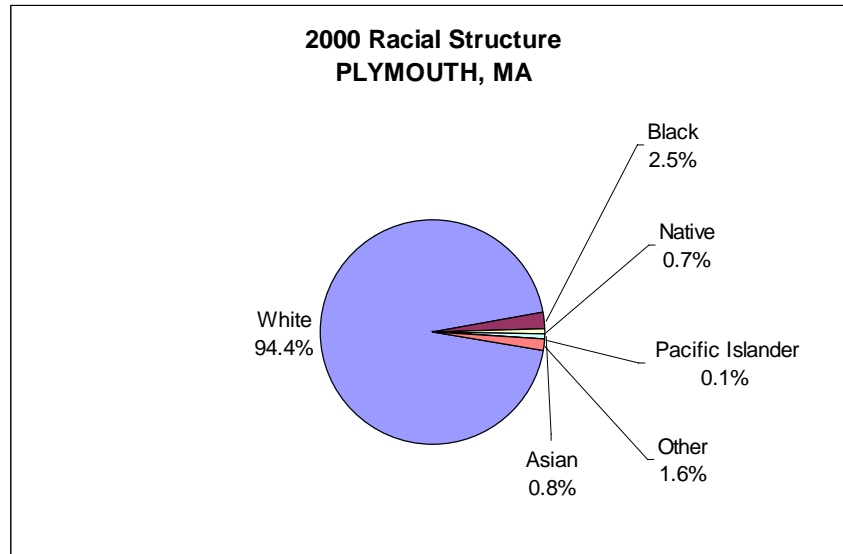


Figure 2. Racial Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

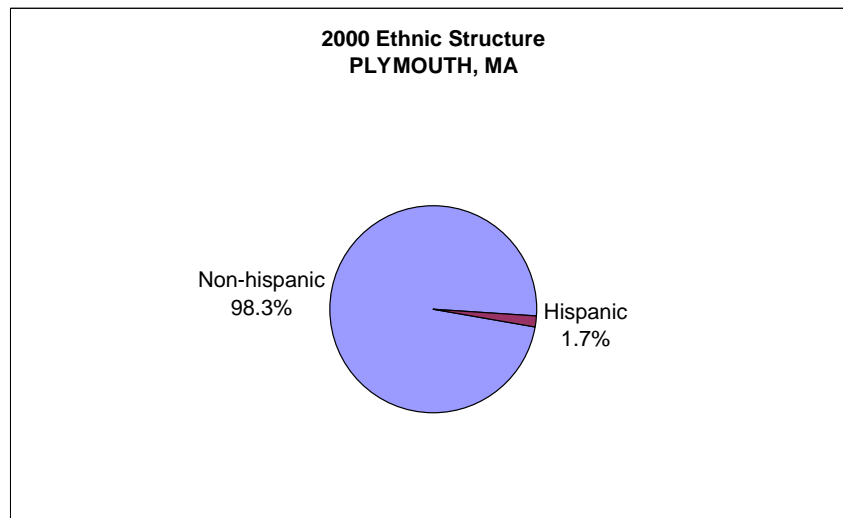


Figure 3. Ethnic Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

For 93.4% of the population, only English was spoken in the home, leaving 6.6% in homes where a language other than English was spoken, including 1.6% of the population who spoke English less than 'very well' according to the 2000 Census.

Of the population 25 years and over, 89.4% were high school graduates or higher and 26.4% had a bachelor's degree or higher. Again of the population 25 years and over, 2.8% did not reach ninth grade, 7.8% attended some high school but did not graduate, 32.0% completed

high school, 22.5% had some college with no degree, 8.5% received an associate's degree, 17.9% earned a bachelor's degree, and 8.5% received either a graduate or professional degree.

Although religion percentages are not available through the U.S. Census, according to the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) in 2000, the religion with the highest number of congregations and adherents in Plymouth County was Catholic with 40 congregations and 205,060 adherents. Other prominent congregations in the county were Jewish (8 with 23,600 adherents), United Church of Christ (25 with 9,491) and Episcopal (15 with 6,894 adherents). The total number of adherents to any religion was down 36.1% from 1990 (ARDA 2000).

Issues/Processes

As noted above, the population of the town of Plymouth has grown by 145% over the last two decades, encouraged by its proximity to Boston (Plymouth Area Chamber of Commerce 2007). This puts numerous demands on the municipality to meet this growth with schools and other infrastructure.

The Town Wharf, where the commercial fishing fleet is stationed, was described in 2002 as in very poor condition and badly in need of repair (Fort Point Associates 2002). It was temporarily closed in the winter of 2004, after having been found to be structurally unsound; plans for a new wharf were being developed (Michaud J 2004). The new plans involved implementing a user fee for commercial fishermen and anyone else using the wharf to pay for the proposed improvements; currently fishermen tying up to the dock to unload or get fuel and ice pay no fee. Fishermen argue that the proposed fee structure could drive some of them out of business (Old Colony Memorial 2004). The plans will also reduce the amount of space used for unloading by Reliable Fish Co., to make room for other businesses, which the owner of Reliable Fish says will have a dramatic effect on his business (Race 2004). As of 2007, the pier has been repaired and has reopened.⁴

Cape Cod Bay, where many Plymouth fishermen work, is critical Northern right whale habitat, and parts of the bay are frequently closed to fixed fishing gear or require gear modifications at times when the whale are present, which impacts lobstermen from Plymouth (Old Colony Memorial 2005).

Cultural attributes

In July, Plymouth holds the annual [Blessing of the Fleet](#). Commercial fishing vessels are decorated and parade around the harbor. The celebration honors Plymouth's maritime traditions with food, education, and celebration, and honors those who have chosen to make their living from the sea with a memorial service. The town also has a Fishermen's Memorial Park (Town of Plymouth 2007).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Current Economy

According to the U.S. Census 2000⁵, 64.9% (27,104 individuals) of the total population 16 years of age and over were in the labor force (see Figure 4), of which 3.0% were unemployed, 0.1% were in the Armed Forces, and 64.9% were employed.

⁴ Profile review comment, William Adler, Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, 8 Otis Place, Scituate, MA 02066, August 29, 2007

⁵ Again, Census data from 2000 are used because they are universally available and offer cross-comparability among communities. Some statistics, particularly median home price, are likely to have changed significantly since 2000.

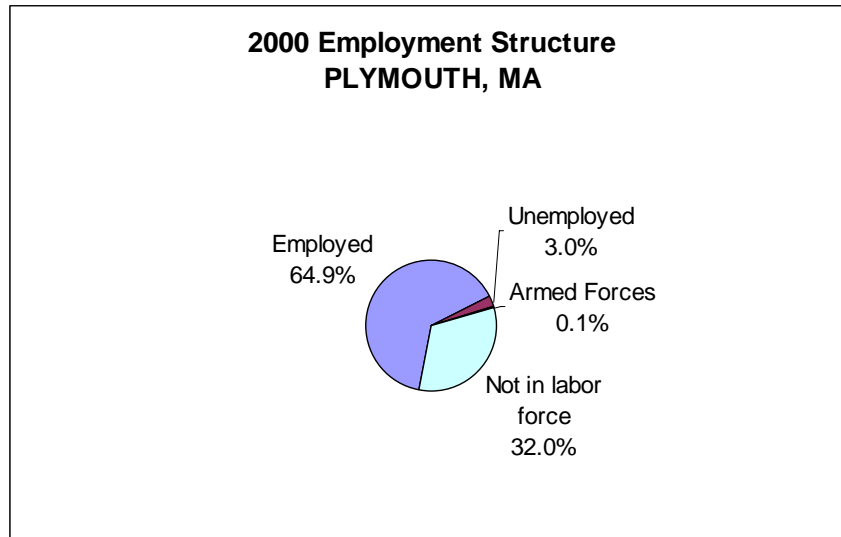


Figure 4. Employment Structure in 2000 (US Census Bureau 2000)

The largest employer in Plymouth is Jordan Hospital (1,100 employees), followed by Entergy (630), Party Lite (400), and Tech Etch (400) (Plymouth Regional Economic Development Council 2003). The Lobster Pound has roughly 20 employees.⁶

According to Census 2000 data, jobs in the census grouping which includes agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining accounted for 176 positions or 0.7% of all jobs. Self employed workers, a category where fishermen might be found, accounted for 1,593 positions of 6.2% of jobs. Education, health, and social services (21.2%), retail trade (14.7%), professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (9.5%), and finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (9.4%) were the primary industries.

Median household income in Plymouth was \$54,677 (up 37.1% from \$39,886 in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and per capita income was \$23,732. For full-time year round workers, males made approximately 42.5% more per year than females.

The average family in Plymouth consisted of 3.16 persons. With respect to poverty, 4.4% of families (down from 4.8% in 1990 [US Census Bureau 1990]) and 5.4% of individuals earned below the U.S. Census poverty threshold. This threshold is \$8,794 for individuals and ranges from \$11,239-35,060 for families, depending on number of persons (2-9) (US Census Bureau 2000b). In 2000, 29.2% of all families (of any size) earned less than \$35,000 per year.

In 2000, Plymouth had a total of 21,250 housing units of which 86.7% were occupied and 75.4% were detached one unit homes. Almost 20% of these homes were built before 1940. Mobile homes, boats, RVs and vans accounted for 3.5% of the total housing units; 93.3% of detached units had between 2 and 9 rooms. In 2000, the median cost for a home in this area was \$166,300. Of vacant housing units, 10.6% were used for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Of occupied units 22.4% were renter occupied.

Government

The Town of Plymouth is governed by a Board of Selectmen with five members elected in overlapping three year terms (Town of Plymouth 2007).

⁶ Personal Communication, John, The Lobster Pound, 325 Manomet Point Road, Plymouth, MA 02360, 8/8/05

Fishery involvement in government

The town has an 11-member harbor committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, which oversees various activities in and around the harbor (Town of Plymouth 2007). The Downtown/Harbor Task Force focuses on issues affecting the waterfront area of downtown Plymouth and created a Master Plan to encourage mixed use development of this area. One of the goals of their Master Plan is to maintain and expand marine businesses in this area, including those related to commercial and recreational fishing. Another goal involves improving existing infrastructure, including docks (Fort Point Associates Inc. 2002).

There is also a Harbormaster's Office with a harbormaster, several assistant harbormasters, and staff. In addition, there is an Inland Fisheries Committee whose purpose is "to promote, enhance and restore the passage of anadromous fish such as River Herring and catadromous fish to their current and historic waterways" (Town of Plymouth 2007).

Institutional

Fishing associations

The Plymouth Lobstermen's Association maintains a winch for unloading on the Town Pier as well as floats on the pier with dues collected from members (Michaud 2004).

The [Massachusetts Fisherman's Partnership](#) focuses on issues for fishermen in different ports in Massachusetts. The Partnership responded to the need of health care for fishermen and their families by developing the Fishing Partnership Health Insurance Plan with federal and state aid. This plan has been in place since 1997 and reduces the amount of money that fishermen's families have to pay to be covered by health insurance (Hall-Arber 2001).

Fishing assistance centers

Information on fishing assistance centers in Plymouth is unavailable through secondary data collection.

Other fishing-related organizations

[The Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences](#), located in Plymouth, conducts research on fish behavior and fishing practices to develop sustainable and selective fishing practices. The Center works with commercial fishermen, local communities, and with state and federal agencies.

Physical

Plymouth is 5 miles from the Cape Cod Canal, 32 miles from New Bedford, and 40 miles from Boston. Plymouth is accessed by road via Route 3, which travels between Cape Cod and Boston, and Route 44, which travels west to Providence. Plymouth has its own municipal airport; the closest large airport is Logan International Airport in Boston (MapQuest nd). [The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority](#) (MBTA) provides public transportation via commuter rail to Boston and other areas of the South Shore.

Plymouth Harbor is protected by Plymouth Beach, a long barrier beach separating the harbor from Plymouth Bay and Cape Cod Bay. The fishing fleet is based at the Town Wharf, located next to the harbor's 4,000 foot breakwater. The Town Pier, which is part of the town-owned Town Wharf section of town, is primarily used by commercial passenger vessels, including the whale watch and fishing charter vessels, but also has the unloading facilities for the fishing fleet, and a privately-owned fueling station. The lobster and commercial fishing vessels do not pay for their space along these two docks. To the north of the Town Wharf are the town

boat ramp and the large state boat ramp, which is restricted to recreational use only. Two fish markets and a bait shop are also located adjacent to the wharf (Fort Point Associates Inc 2002).

[Plymouth Boat Yard](#) and Jesse's Marine are two facilities with a common owner, providing service and hauling for both commercial and recreational vessels in Plymouth. The supply shop at Jesse's Marine supplies commercial fishing equipment, including lobster traps and blocks, bait bags, and clam rakes. [Brewer Marine](#) in the harbor has 100 slips, diesel, and haul out services. Fishermen's Outfitter, located in the marina, sells gear and tackle for sport fishing. [Electra-dyne](#) is a local company manufacturing electrical equipment for both commercial and recreational fishermen

INVOLVEMENT IN NORTHEAST FISHERIES⁷

Commercial

Commercial fishing vessels are generally docked at the Town Wharf, but both these and the lobster boats unload along the Town Dock. The unloading facilities are operated by Reliable Seafood Co. on the town wharf, a wholesale seafood distributor which has been distributing most of the fish and lobsters caught by the fleet for the last 75 years (Fort Point Associates 2002). The Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries reported 70 commercial lobstermen fishing out of Plymouth in 2006. Plymouth was ranked 5th in the state in catch (pounds) for state landings.⁸ There are now only about a dozen commercial finfish boats left in Plymouth.⁹ The Lobster Pound in Manomet, a seafood retailer and wholesaler, also purchases lobsters from about 35-40 vessels from Plymouth and other areas, buying directly from the vessels at the Town Dock. The fish they sell is mostly fresh fish shipped from New Bedford or Boston.¹⁰ Ice is trucked to port from New Bedford, and the same trucks take the catch away with them (Michaud 2004).

In 2003, Plymouth lobstermen complained about low catches of lobster, likely resulting from a combination of increased size limits, overfishing, and lower water temperatures due to a harsh winter. Some lobstermen said it was the worst year they'd seen (Porter 2003). Overall, lobster make up the vast majority of the landings in Plymouth, followed by largemouth groundfish and monkfish (see Table). The number of vessels home ported in Plymouth was variable from 1997-2006, with a high of 69 in 2005, declining to 62 in 2006. The number of vessels with owners living in Plymouth (city owner vessels) was consistently lower than the number of home ported vessels, indicating that many vessels found in Plymouth Harbor are likely owned by people residing in other communities (see Table).

⁷ In reviewing the commercial landings data several factors need to be kept in mind. 1) While both federal and state landings are included, some states provide more detailed data to NMFS than others. For example, shellfish may not be included or data may be reported only by county and not by port. 2) Some communities did not have individual port codes until more recently. Before individual port codes were assigned, landings from those ports were coded at the county level or as an aggregate of two geographically close small ports. Where landings were coded at the county level they cannot be sorted to individual ports for those earlier years, e.g., prior to 2000. 3) Where aggregated codes were used, those aggregate codes may still exist and be in use alongside the new individual codes. Here the landings which are still assigned to the aggregate port code cannot be sorted into the individual ports, so port level data are only those which used the individual port code. 4) Even when individual port codes exist, especially for small ports, landings may be coded at the county level. Here again it is impossible to disaggregate these to a port level, making the port level landings incomplete. 5) In all these cases, the per port data in this profile may under report the total level of landings to the port, though all landings are accounted for in the overall NMFS database.

⁸ Data provided by William Adler, Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, 8 Otis Place, Scituate, MA 02066, September 5, 2007

⁹ Profile review comment, William Adler, Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, 8 Otis Place, Scituate, MA 02066, August 29, 2007

¹⁰ Personal Communication, John, The Lobster Pound, 325 Manomet Point Road, Plymouth, MA 02360, 8/8/05

Landings by Species

Table 1. Rank Value of Landings for Federally Managed Groups

Species	Rank Value of Average Landings from 1997-2006
Lobster	1
Largemouth Groundfish ¹¹	2
Monkfish	3
Dogfish	4
Other ¹²	5
Surf Clams, Ocean Quahog	6
Scallop	7
Skate	8
Summer Flounder, Scup, Black Sea Bass	9
Squid, Mackerel, Butterfish	10
Smallmouth Groundfish ¹³	11
Bluefish	12
Tilefish	13

(Note: Only rank value is provided because value information is confidential in ports with fewer than three vessels or fewer than three dealers, or where one dealer predominates in a particular species and would therefore be identifiable.)

Vessels by Year¹⁴

Table 2. Federal Vessel Permits Between 1997-2006

Year	# Vessels (home ported)	# Vessels (owner's city)
1997	58	46
1998	53	42
1999	54	40
2000	50	39
2001	56	48
2002	56	44
2003	59	45
2004	68	53
2005	69	49
2006	62	47

(Note: # Vessels home ported = No. of permitted vessels with location as homeport,
Vessels (owner's city) = No. of permitted vessels with location as owner residence¹⁵)

¹¹ Largemouth groundfish: cod, winter flounder, yellowtail flounder, American plaice, sand-dab flounder, haddock, white hake, redbait, and pollock

¹² "Other" species includes any species not accounted for in a federally managed group

¹³ Smallmouth multi-species: red hake, ocean pout, mixed hake, black whiting, silver hake (whiting)

¹⁴ Numbers of vessels by owner's city and homeport are as reported by the permit holder on permit application forms. These may not correspond to the port where a vessel lands or even spends the majority of its time when docked.

Recreational

Recreational fishing is a popular activity among Plymouth's numerous tourists. [Captain John Boats](#), a whale watching company, also offers deep sea fishing aboard a party boat in Cape Cod Bay and on Stellwagen Bank, including overnight fishing trips. [The Captain Tim Brady and Sons Company](#) also offers whale watching tours and open and charter boat fishing in both deep sea and in-shore waters. There are a total of [12 charter fishing boats](#) based in Plymouth to accommodate an apparently large demand for recreational fishing. Fishing is also done from the town's docks, jetties, and beaches (State of Massachusetts 2007). [Lobster Tails](#) cruises takes passengers out to haul lobster traps from Plymouth Harbor and to learn about the history of lobster fishing and the biology of lobsters. Shellfishing in area shellfish beds is also a popular activity. Between the years 2001-2005, there were 18 charter and party vessels making 2,093 total trips registered in logbook data by charter and party vessels in Plymouth carrying a total of 70,199 anglers (NMFS VTR data).

Subsistence

Information on the subsistence fishing in Plymouth is either unavailable through secondary data collection or the practice does not exist.

FUTURE

Specific goals of the Downtown Village Center/Waterfront Master Plan include: establishing new piers along the waterfront between the State and Town Piers, providing a central fish cold storage facility, and possibly adding additional docking facilities on the north side of the breakwaters. The town is also aiming to improve the water quality of the harbor to re-open shellfishing beds (Fort Point Associates 2002). However, the Fort Point Associates report on waterfront development notes, "While retaining Plymouth's fishing boats is important to its diversity and character, the Town is unlikely to capture expanded fishing uses given industry conditions and competing facilities" in Marshfield, Scituate, and Provincetown. The Fort Point Associates report also recommends implementing usage fees for commercial fishermen to use the Town Pier.

Reliable Fish Co., which does a majority of packing and wholesale distribution of fish in Plymouth, has plans to demolish its current facility and construct a new building to include a restaurant. Reliable Fish would continue to distribute fish in the wholesale market (Race 2004).

Fishermen are concerned that the proposed plan for usage fees for the new Town Wharf will put them out of business, or at least make it more difficult for them to make a living, given the difficult situation they are in already with increasingly stringent regulations (Old Colony Memorial Staff 2004).

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¹⁵ The Owner-City from the permit files is technically the address at which the owner receives mail concerning their permitted vessels, which could reflect the actual location of residence, the mailing address as distinct from residence, owner business location, or the address at which a subsidiary receives mail about the permits.

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